

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a packet network having base stations for communication with mobile units, comprising:

initiating a call involving a group of mobile units,

receiving a signal at two or more of the base stations from one of the mobile units,

determining at each of the base stations, a respective priority parameter for the signal as received at the each-base station,

adding the priority parameters to at least some packets of the respective signals to form prioritized signals,

transmitting the prioritized signals containing the respective priority parameters to the network,

receiving the prioritized signals at base stations in the network,

selecting at each of the base stations, a prioritized signal for transmission to mobile units in the group, and

transmitting the selected signal ~~having a selected priority parameter~~ to the mobile units.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 further comprising ceasing transmission to the network, of a signal received from the mobile unit, after determining that the signal has a priority lower than that of a corresponding prioritized signal received from the network.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 further comprising commencing transmission of a signal to the network, received from the mobile unit, after determining that the signal has a priority greater than that of a corresponding prioritized signal received from the network.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 3 further comprising the step of waiting for a predetermined time before commencing transmission of the signal to the network.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 3 further comprising the step of discarding at least one packet of comprising the signal transmitted to the network.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the priority parameter is determined by reference to a quality of the respective signal received from the mobile unit, and the signal transmitted to the units is selected according to highest quality.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the quality is an error count for part or all of the respective signal received from the mobile unit.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the quality is the received signal strength of the respective signal received from the mobile unit.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the quality is the signal to noise ratio of the respective signal received from the mobile unit.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the priority parameter of a signal is set to a termination value when the signal ends.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a packet network having base stations for communication with mobile units, comprising:

initiating a call involving a group of mobile units,

receiving signals at two or more of the base stations from two or more of the units,

determining at each of the base stations, a respective priority parameter for each of the signals as received at a base station,

adding the priority parameters to at least some packets of the respective signals to form prioritized signals,

transmitting the prioritized signals containing the respective priority parameters to the network,

receiving the prioritized signals at base stations in the network,

selecting at each of the base stations, a prioritized signal for transmission to mobile units in the group, and

transmitting the selected signal ~~having a selected priority parameter~~ to the units.

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further comprising ceasing transmission to the network, of each signal received from a mobile unit, that has a priority lower than that of a corresponding prioritized signal received from the network.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 11 wherein the priority parameter is determined by a priority allocated to the two or more units.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 11 wherein the priority parameter is determined by reference to a quality of the signals from the two or more of the units.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 14 wherein the quality is an error count for part or all of the signals from the two or more of the units.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 14 wherein the quality is the received signal strength of the signals from the two or more of the units.

17. (Original) A method according to claim 14 wherein the quality is the signal to noise ratio of the signals from the two or more of the units.

18. (Currently Amended) A communication network or a base station for a network that implements or assists in a method ~~as claimed in any of the preceding claims~~according to claim 1.

19. (New) A method of operating a base station in a packet network during a group call between mobile units, the method comprising:

receiving a signal from a mobile unit in the group call;

determining a priority parameter for the received signal;

adding the parameter to at least some packets of the received signal to form a prioritised signal; and

transmitting the prioritised signal to the network.

20. (New) A method of operating a base station according to claim 19 further comprising:
receiving one or more prioritised signals having respective priority parameters from
the network; and
ceasing transmission to the network if the added parameter is lower in priority than the
received parameters.
21. (New) A method of operating a base station in a packet network during a group call
between mobile units, the method comprising:
receiving prioritised signals containing respective priority parameters from two or
more other base stations in the network;
selecting one of the received signals according to the received priority parameters, and
transmitting the selected signal to units in the group call.
22. (New) A method of operating a base station according to claim 21 further comprising
selecting a different one of the received signals according to changes in the respective priority
parameters.